

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 HELSIN 00815 221725Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01
INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 PA-02 PRS-01
/073 W

-----230714Z 074213 /22

R 221455Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1270
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS HELSINKI 0815

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FI
SUBJECT: SETTLEMENT BEING REACHED BUT STRIKES PERSIST IN FINLAND

REF: HELSINKI 0743

1. SUMMARY: WHILE SETTLEMENTS CONTINUE TO BE REACHED IN
FINNISH LABOR MARKET, STRIKES BY SMALL UNIONS IN KEY SECTORS
HAVE DISRUPTED TRANSPORTATION AND SERVICES. PRESIDENT
KEKKONEN HAS FELT MOVED TO COMMENT ON STRIKERS' IRRESPONSI-
BILITY. END SUMMARY.

2. FINNISH LABOR SITUATION CONTINUES TO IMPROVE AS SEVERAL
OF FINLAND'S LARGEST UNIONS HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT ON NEW
CONTRACTS OR ARE EXPECTED TO WITHIN FEW DAYS. LARGE SAK
LABOR FEDERATION-AFFILIATED COMMERCIAL WORKERS' UNION,
SEAMEN'S UNION, AND MECHANIZED WOODWORKERS' UNION HAVE
SIGNED, AVERTING THREATENED STRIKES, AND METAL AND PAPER
WORKERS ARE EXPECTED TO RATIFY AGREEMENTS NEXT WEEK. WITH
THEIR ACCESSION TO MEDIATOR'S PROPOSALS, OVER ONE
MILLION FINNISH WORKERS, TWO-THIRDS OF THOSE SUBJECT TO
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 HELSIN 00815 221725Z

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, WILL HAVE SIGNED TWO-YEAR
CONTRACTS.

3. BARGAINING IMPASSE OF EARLY SPRING IS THUS BEING
RESOLVED WITH SURPRISING RAPIDITY WHILE KEEPING
SETTLEMENTS ESSENTIALLY WITHIN MODERATE GUIDELINES PROPOSED BY
STATE MEDIATOR LIINAMAA. SINGLE IMPORTANT EXCEPTION

IS COMMERCIAL WORKERS, WHO GAINED THREE-YEAR CONTRACT WITH EVENTUAL WAGE INCREASES SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN LIINAMAA LINE. IT DOES NOT APPEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THIS EXCEPTION IS LIKELY TO ERODE OTHER SETTLEMENTS. LABATT HAS BEEN TOLD BY BOTH MANAGEMENT AND LABOR THAT THEY AND LIINAMAA HAD REACHED INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING THAT COMMERCIAL WORKERS SHOULD BE GRANTED ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR PAST SUB-STANDARD WAGE STRUCTURE.

4. IRONICALLY, AT SAME TIME AS MAJOR SAK UNIONS REACHING AGREEMENT, SMALL UNIONS OF TECHNICIANS AFFILIATED WITH TINY STTK HAVE BROADENED STRIKE ACTION TO TIE UP FINNISH TRANSPORTATION NETWORK MORE SERIOUSLY THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE LAST SPRING. ILLEGAL SYMPATHY STRIKES BY TRANSPORT TECHNICIANS IN SUPPORT OF ELECTRICAL POWER PLANT TECHNICIANS HAVE PARALYZED FINNISH FLAG SHIPPING IN FINNISH HARBORS SINCE APRIL 18 AND FINNAIR DOMESTIC OPERATIONS STARTING APRIL 21. GOVT MEDIATORS WILL ATTEMPT SOLUTION OF POWER STRIKE APRIL 23 BUT IN MEANTIME PASSENGER AND GOODS TRAFFIC WILL BE ACUTELY CURTAILED. PUBLIC INCONVENIENCE IS ADDITIONALLY INCREASED BY SAK-AFFILIATED RESTAURANT AND HOTEL WORKERS STRIKE WHICH BEGAN APRIL 21.

5. WHILE GOVT HAS NOT MADE ANY SPECIAL ATTEMPT TO INTERVENE IN STRIKES, PRESIDENT KEKKONEN WAS MOVED TO CRITICIZE THEM IN HIS ADDRESS APRIL 16 TO SAK 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN TAMPERE. ACKNOWLEDGING USEFUL ROLE OF TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES IN FINNISH UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 HELSIN 00815 221725Z

HISTORY, KEKKONEN SAID IT HARD IN TODAY'S SOCIETY TO STRIKE AGAINST "CAPITALISTS" ALONE WITHOUT INFLECTING COSTS ALSO ON STATE AS EMPLOYER AND ON CITIZENRY. HE CHIDED "SMALL KEY GROUPS CARRYING OUT CENTRAL AND VITAL TASKS" FOR IRRESPONSIBLE STRIKE ACTIONS. KEKKONEN ALSO QUESTIONED CONTINUED VIABILITY OF STRIKE AS WEAPON IN TODAY'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION, AND SUGGESTED THAT BY INSTITUTING INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY NEED FOR STRIKES MIGHT BE OBIATED.

6. COMMENT: PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON IRRESPONSIBLE STRIKERS WERE CLEARLY DIRECTED AT STTK, WHICH APPARENTLY DECIDED TO IGNORE HIS VIEWS IN BROADENING SYMPATHY STRIKES. ALTHOUGH PUBLIC AND NON-COMMUNIST PRESS SHARE PRESIDENT'S DISAPPROVAL OF TECHNICIANS' ACTIONS, FOR THE MOMENT STTK APPEARS TO BE GETTING AWAY WITH ITS TACTICS. BASED ON DISCUSSIONS WITH SEVERAL LABOR LEADERS DURING RECENT VISIT HERE OF AFL-CIO'S ALBERT SHANKER, WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT SAKD AND MAINSTREAM LABOR IN

FINLAND ARE ANXIOUS TO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM
STTK. LEADERS HAVE MAINTAINED TO US THAT SAK DOES
NOT CONDONE STRIKES WHOSE PRIMARY IMPACT IS ON
FINNISH PEOPLE RATHER THAN EMPLOYERS. AT LEAST AT
PRESENT, THIS CLAIM TO MODERATION SEEMS TO BE BORNE
OUT IN RALLYING OF MAJOR UNIONS TO LIINAMAA LINE.

7. WE WILL BE WATCHING FOR DEVELOPMENTS BASED ON
PRESIDENT'S VIEWS ON INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY WHICH SHOULD
BE AT LEAST DEFINED IN NEW BILL GOVT IS PREPARING.
REACTION SO FAR HAS BEEN MIXED AND GENERAL IMPRESSION
IS THAT KEKKONEN DID NOT HAVE SPECIFIC FAR-REACHING
PROGRAM IN MIND.
HOUSTON

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, LABOR DISPUTE SETTLEMENT, NEGOTIATIONS, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977HELSIN00815
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770141-1214
Format: TEL
From: HELSINKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770430/aaaaazjp.tel
Line Count: 130
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dc338ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 HELSINKI 743
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2727979
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SETTLEMENT BEING REACHED BUT STRIKES PERSIST IN FINLAND
TAGS: ELAB, FI, (KEKKONEN, URHO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dc338ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009